
Praxis SLLA Exam Passing Score Policy

The Background:

A key component in the recently revised Tennessee Instructional Leadership Licensure Program is the Praxis licensure exam #1010 entitled “School Leadership Licensure Assessment” (SLLA). Tennessee has used this exam since it was first developed by ETS in 2001. During the 2008-2009 academic year, ETS revised this test and changed it from a six-hour, all essay test to a four-hour exam containing 100 scenario-based multiple-choice questions and seven constructed response (essay) questions. [The new test will have the same title, but will be Praxis exam #1011.]

For many years Tennessee has required newly licensed educators to demonstrate subject-area content knowledge by means of a licensure exam. This is done to ensure that educators have entry-level, minimal competency in the content area and to validate the mastery that occurred by means of the preparation program. The State Board of Education prescribes which tests are taken in the various subject areas and approves the passing scores for each of the licensure examinations.

During the months of April and May, 2009, ETS conducted two multi-state Standard Setting Sessions for the newly re-constituted SLLA exam. Each panel contained 23 experts in school leadership including one member of each panel from the State of Tennessee. These panels were charged with preparing a recommendation for the states using the SLLA so each state could in turn select its own passing score for the new exam.

After reviewing the report from ETS, SDE staff determined a recommendation for the SBE for the SLLA, the new version of which will first be administered on September 12, 2009. The recommended passing score for test 1011 is 160.

Master Plan Connection:

This item supports the *Master Plan* by providing for effective school leaders.

The Recommendation:

The State Department of Education staff recommends adoption of this item on final reading. The SBE staff supports the approval of this passing score.



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ETS NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New School Leaders Licensure Assessment to Launch September 2009 Assessment will be shorter, cost less

Princeton, N.J. (July 27, 2009) — Educational Testing Service today announced that its new School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) will be administered for the first time on September 12, 2009. The new test is fully aligned with the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards and will have a lower fee and a reduced writing burden for candidates.

ETS worked with key stakeholders, including the State Consortium on Education Leadership (SCEL) throughout the development phase. Through its support of the SCEL project sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), ETS development staff kept abreast of the changes that were made to the ISLLC standards.

"School leaders play an increasingly critical role in the school and student achievement," says Linda Tyler, ETS Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Teacher Licensure and Certification. "We timed this development project to coincide with the publication of the 2008 ISLLC standards so that states could be assured that their licensure test was aligned with national standards."

ETS convened a National Advisory Committee to oversee the development of the new test. This committee comprised a cross-section of expert practitioners and faculty from 17 states who provided crucial input in the development of the test specifications. Committee members represented a variety of groups, including elementary, middle and secondary educators as well as urban, rural and suburban school districts. Representatives from key organizations, including the National Association of Secondary School Principals, CCSSO and the National Association of Elementary School Principals also observed the development process.

States wishing to use the new SLLA were invited to participate in a Multi-state Standard Setting Process as a step in setting the passing score each state will require for the new test. ETS has the *only* educator licensure testing program that is currently providing states the opportunity to participate in Multi-state Standard Setting Studies. This process brings together representative groups of up to 50 practicing educators from states wishing to set scores on a particular licensure assessment. The groups make recommendations regarding the level of knowledge

and/or skill that would be expected from a beginning practitioner just qualified to begin independent practice as a school leader. Participants in the SLLA Multi-state Standard Setting Study engaged in extensive discussion to define the “just qualified candidate” for school leadership licensure, and they received thorough training in the standard setting approach.

Dr. Shirley Marie McCarther, Assistant Professor in Urban Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Missouri – Kansas City, who was a panelist at the study, described the process as “rigorous, comprehensive and thorough.” She says, “I have greater confidence in the value of the test score as a result of participating in the Multi-state Standards Setting Panel.”

Each state maintains control by setting its own passing score for the SLLA; this study provides valuable judgments to inform their decision. State-specific standard setting studies are also available, but use of the multi-state approach is particularly beneficial in cases where states have difficulty gathering sufficient practicing professionals to engage in these studies.

More information about the new SLLA can be found at www.ets.org/slla.

About ETS

At nonprofit ETS, we advance quality and equity in education for people worldwide by creating assessments based on rigorous research. ETS serves individuals, educational institutions and government agencies by providing customized solutions for teacher certification, English-language learning, and elementary, secondary and post-secondary education, as well as conducting education research, analysis and policy studies. Founded in 1947, ETS develops, administers and scores more than 50 million tests annually — including the TOEFL® and TOEIC® tests, the GRE® test and *The Praxis Series*™ assessments — in more than 180 countries, at over 9,000 locations worldwide. www.ets.org

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